

Chapter 2

Single-Family Detached Residential

A. Introduction

The urban form of the City of Huntington Beach has been determined by subdivisions that have occurred since the City's founding. The design and configuration of lots and uses reflect planning styles that were typically used at the time of their development; the "town lot", the "superblock" and the "planned development" pattern. The street pattern is primarily comprised of curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs with limited access points to surrounding major vehicular corridors.

This chapter provides guidelines which are applicable to single-family detached residential development. The guidelines apply to smaller infill as well as larger master planned projects and encourage the highest level of design quality while allowing maximum flexibility in the design of single-family residential development.



Site specific standards and guidelines for Planned Unit Developments and Specific Plan areas shall take precedence when in conflict with the following guidelines. Where such standards or guidelines are silent, these guidelines will serve as a supplement.

B. General Design Objectives

The design of single-family residential development projects in Huntington Beach should:

- Respect the scale proportion and character of the surrounding area
- Mitigate existing adverse automobile oriented planning patterns by providing pedestrian friendly design solutions
- Establish attractive, inviting, imaginative and functional site arrangement of buildings and parking areas, and a high quality architectural and landscape design



- Create visual interest and variety, while maintaining a sense of harmony and proportion along street frontages and other portions of the project exposed to public view
- Provide for adequate open space and other single-family detached residential development design characteristics such as ample street parking and privacy
- Preserve and incorporate natural amenities unique to the site such as ocean views, topography, mature trees, etc. into the project development proposal
- Preserve and incorporate structures which are distinctive because of their age, cultural significance, or unique architectural style into the project development proposal.

C. Site Planning

1. Grading

- a. Development should be sensitive to its natural surroundings. Grading should be minimized by following the natural contours to the greatest extent possible. Graded slopes should be rounded and contoured to blend with the existing terrain.
- b. Grading should emphasize and accentuate scenic vistas and natural landforms.
- c. Large manufactured slopes should be avoided in favor of several smaller slopes integrated throughout the project. Smaller slopes are less obtrusive, more easily vegetated and can be used to add visual interest, preserve views and provide visual buffers where necessary
- d. Significant natural vegetation should be retained and incorporated into the project.



2. Compatibility

- a. The arrangement of structures, circulation and open spaces should recognize the particular characteristics of the site and should relate to the surrounding built environment in pattern, function scale, character and materials. In developed areas, new projects should meet or exceed the standards of quality which have been set by surrounding development.
- b. Structures which are distinctive due to their age, cultural significance, or unique architectural style should be preserved and incorporated in the project development proposal.
- c. Residential uses should be buffered from incompatible development. Intensified landscaping, increased setbacks and appropriate building orientation should be utilized as a means of providing adequate separation between such land uses.



3. Site Entry and Edge Design

- a. Neighborhoods in Huntington Beach should be distinguished by entry and edge design features such as ornamental landscaping, open space areas, natural features, architectural monumentation and enhanced paving.



*Huntington Seac Cliff Community
landscaped entry*



Varied Front and Side Yards

4. Building Siting/Lot Design

Variation of building placement and lot development patterns is essential to achieve visual diversity and avoid monotony. One or more of the following techniques shall be incorporated into residential project design solutions:

a. Varied Front Setbacks

Placement of homes and garages at variable setbacks establishes different patterns of visible open spaces and creates a visually interesting streetscape.

b. Varied Side Yard Setbacks

Varying the distance between adjoining homes, or between homes and fences, results in different types/sizes of yards and private patio areas, maximizing use of land and enhancing dwelling privacy.



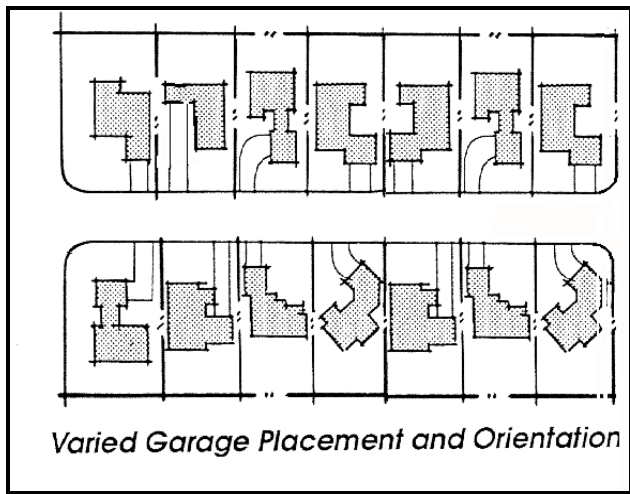
Desirable Building Siting/Lot Design

c. Varied Lot Widths

Making some lots wider, and some narrower than the average can provide different amounts of open space areas between structures and allows siting of different types and sizes of homes. On narrow lots, a variation of only three or four feet can make a perceptible difference.

d. Varied Garage Placement and Orientation

Angled or side-entry garages can be used to break up the monotony of garage doors facing the street. Vary driveway locations whenever possible to add variety to the street scene.



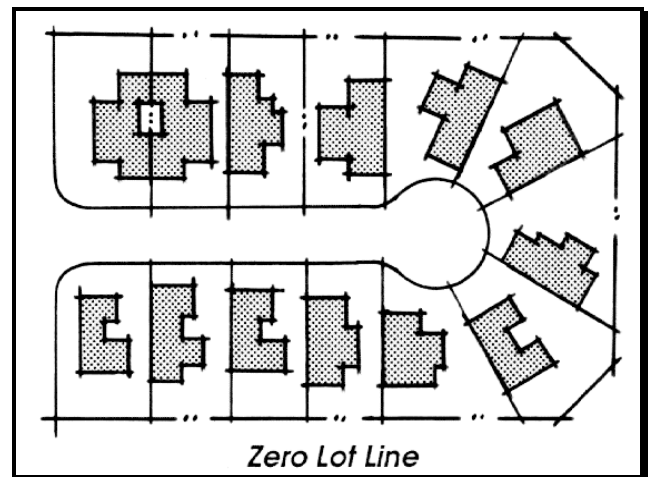
Side entry garages and siting of garages towards the rear of the lot is encouraged

e. Clustering - Zero Lot Line

Clustering homes or using a zero lot line arrangement may be an effective method of achieving a desired density.



Clustering - Zero Lot Line building siting



Zero Lot-Line arrangements create different types of open spaces

f. "Z" Lots

Making some lots wider than the average can provide different amounts of open area between structures. Innovative techniques such as "zippered", "z" and wide-shallow lots can enhance the street scene and lessen the impact of closely spaced homes on the street.

5. Streets

- a. New residential streets should connect with adjacent streets to form a continuous neighborhood network of streets whenever possible.
- b. The length of blocks within single-family subdivisions should be between 300 and 400 feet. Longer blocks may be considered provided they incorporate at least one of the following design features:
 - Varied building design: A significant difference in the massing and composition (not just finish materials) of each adjacent house. No design may be repeated more frequently than every fourth house.
 - Varied front setbacks

6. Sidewalks

- a. Sidewalks should be at a minimum (4) ft. in width and should be separated from streets by a minimum six (6) ft. parkway or planting strip.
- b. Sidewalks should be safe, visually attractive, and well defined by landscaping and lights. Use of decorative pavement is encouraged on private property.
- c. Use of meandering sidewalks is encouraged.



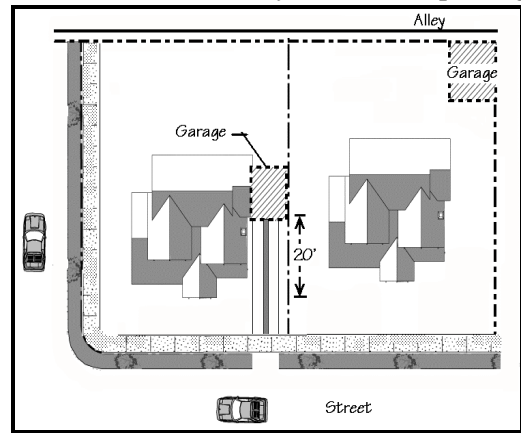
Well-landscaped sidewalk

7. Driveways

- a. Driveways should be located as far as possible from street intersections.
- b. Adequate space should be provided between two adjacent driveways. Driveways should be at least 8 feet apart to allow planting and growth of landscaping materials and minimize the continuity of driveway surfaces.

8. Garage Location

- a. Garage design should diminish the visual impact of garage doors along street frontages. Offsetting the garage behind the front facade of the house, providing a side entry garage, accessing the garage from the side or rear of the lot, or locating the garage to the rear of the lot is encouraged.
- b. The siting of garages and their driveways should maximize the availability of on-street parking.



Garage siting should diminish their adverse streetscene impacts

9. Open Space

- a. Each neighborhood should incorporate passive and active open spaces such as park areas, playing fields, and/or public squares. Some of these open space areas may be integrated with community facilities, schools, churchyards, or playgrounds.



- b. Open space areas should be located within approximately 1,500 feet from every dwelling in the new development.
- c. Open space areas should be provided in large meaningful areas, not unusable fragments.
- d. Natural amenities such as existing mature trees views and topographic features should be preserved and integrated into the design.

10. Walls and Fences

- a. Walls and fences should be architecturally enhanced and should be constructed with materials such as masonry, metal, wood or a combination thereof. Tiered planting should be provided adjacent to perimeter walls along street frontages to soften their appearance.
- b. Community perimeter walls should be of masonry construction or ornamental metal (view fencing) and sited to accommodate a minimum fifteen (15) ft. landscaped setback.



Enhanced community perimeter wall

- c. Walls sections greater than 50 ft. in length should incorporate at least two of the following design features which are proportionate to the wall length:
 - A minimum 2-ft. change in plane for at least 10 ft.
 - A minimum 18-inch high raised planter for at least 10 ft.
 - A minimum 18-inch change in height for at least 10 ft.
 - Use of pilasters at 50 ft. maximum intervals and at changes in wall planes
 - A minimum 4-ft. high view fencing section for at least 10 ft.
- d. Gates should be provided in walls or fences to allow emergency access and to facilitate convenient pedestrian access to activity areas and adjacent uses.
- e. Walls should be eliminated or sited to provide additional setbacks areas at project entries to accommodate distinctive landscaping, ornamental gateways, signage and street furniture.
- f. Walls should be curved or angled at corner locations along street frontages.



Walls at project entrances should be eliminated or setback

11. Paving

- a. Decorative paving should be incorporated into project site planning design; driveway entries, pedestrian walkways and crosswalks.
- b. Paving materials should complement the architectural design. The use of stamped concrete, stone, brick, pavers, and color concrete are encouraged.

12. Lighting

- a. The type and location of site and building lighting should preclude direct glare onto adjoining property, streets, or skyward.
- b. Pedestrian scale/decorative light fixtures are encouraged. "High mast" poles are discouraged.



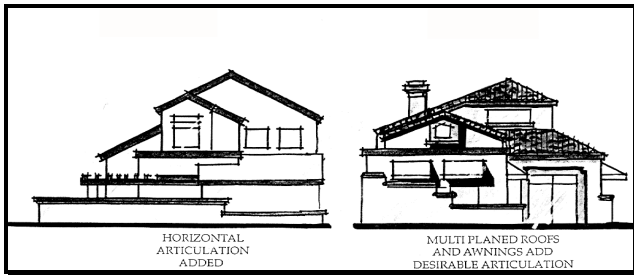
Pedestrian-scale lighting fixture

- c. Open spaces should be adequately lighted with durable low maintenance fixtures.

D. Architectural Guidelines

1. Architectural Imagery

- a. There is no specific architectural “style” required for residential structures in Huntington Beach. High quality, innovative and imaginative architecture is encouraged. The building design should take into consideration, take advantage of and enhance the site’s unique natural amenities. “Human scale” form, proportions and architectural building details are encouraged.
- b. The selected architectural style/ design should consider compatibility with surrounding building character, including style, form, size, color, materials and roofline. In developed areas infill projects should meet or exceed the standards of quality which have been set by surrounding development.
- c. The designer is expected to employ variations in form, building materials, building details and siting in order to create visual interest. In all cases the chosen architectural style should be employed on all building elevations.
- d. Architectural elements such as windows, doors, cornice elements, etc. should create a rhythmic composition, taking into consideration scale, style and proportion of architecture elements.



Alignment of architectural elements is encouraged

- e. Clear entry space sequences, extending from sidewalks to the private front door are encouraged.
- f. Front porches which create architecturally attractive semi-private front yard spaces and foster community interface are encouraged.

2. Building Facade and Roof Articulation

- a. Individual dwellings should relate in terms of mass and bulk but should be distinguishable from one another. Different design compositions, not just finish materials, should be provided on adjacent dwellings. “Cookie-cut” design solutions are not acceptable. The same building elevation should not be repeated more frequently than each fourth house.



Single-family residential facades

- b. New roof designs should complement qualities of neighboring residential structures such as type, slope, size, materials, and colors.
- c. Long unarticulated exterior walls and monolithic roof forms should be avoided on all structures. Massing offsets, fenestration, varied textures, openings, recesses, and design accents are strongly encouraged.



“High-quality” architecture is encouraged

d. All elevations should be architecturally enhanced. Building elevations which are visible from streets and open spaces, should be significantly articulated. Elements such as recesses of stories, porches, balconies, reveals and awnings are encouraged.

e. Whenever possible one-story masses should be incorporated into elevation designs. Where two story masses occur, one or more of the following measures should be used to soften the visual impact of a monolithic two-story wall surface;

- Variety of hip and gable roofs
- Trellises and shade structures
- Second-story balconies
- Cantilevered second-story elements



*Incorporate one-story massing in building design
Exterior materials and details should be stylistically consistent*

f. Front porches are encouraged. The roof pitch for a porch should be slightly lower than that of the main building.



Front porches are encouraged

g. Vertical and horizontal roof articulation is required. Roof articulation may be achieved by changes in plane of no less than 2 ft. and the use of gables, hips, and dormers. Flat roofs are discouraged, unless appropriate to the architectural style.

3. Fenestration

a. The placement and relationship of window, doors and other building openings plays a significant role in achieving a unified building composition. Where possible, window sizes, should be coordinated vertically and horizontally and window design should be consistent in terms of style and general arrangement on all building sides.

4. Garage Design

a. Garage doors should not dominate the streetscene. Multiple panel door designs, windows or other architectural detailing should be used on garage doors to reduce their impact and scale.

b. The frontage of any garage should be set back a minimum of 3 ft. from the dwelling's first story frontage. Garages may be recessed less or project in front of the dwelling, only if they occupy no more than 50% of the building frontage and incorporate at least one of the following compensating design features:

- An entry porch or trellis not less than 12-ft. wide, located in front of the living area, and extending not less than 2-ft. beyond the front of the garage; or
 - Useable open space (balcony/deck) above the garage with a trellis or roof along the frontage of the garage
- c. Garages that are varied in size, detached, or connected to homes by breezeways are encouraged.
- d. In order to prevent vehicles from blocking sidewalk areas the driveway depth should be a minimum of 20 feet. Garages with parking aprons less than 20 feet in length should have automatic garage door openers with sectional roll-up doors.

5. Building Materials and Colors

- a. The choice and mix of materials on the facades of residential units and garage doors has a significant visual impact. Materials should be consistently applied and should be chosen to work harmoniously with adjacent materials. Piecemeal embellishment and frequent changes in materials should be avoided.
- b. Materials tend to appear substantial and integral to the structure when material changes occur at changes in plane. Material changes not accompanied by changes in plane appear “tacked-on” and are strongly discouraged.
- c. Exterior materials and architectural details should compliment each other and should be stylistically consistent.



Use of complimentary building materials and colors palette enhances building design

- d. Exposed gutters and downspouts should be colored to match fascia or wall materials, unless designed as an outstanding architectural feature of the overall theme.

E. Landscaping Guidelines

1. Standard Guidelines

- a. Landscaping should be used to frame, soften and embellish the quality of residential environment, to buffer units from noise or undesirable views, and to break up large expanses of parking.
- b. Layered tree shrub/turf plants and decorative hardscape features complementary to the site and building design should be utilized to enhance the visual character of the project.



- c. Street trees should be incorporated in parkway planting strips along all public and private streets in new single-family neighborhoods.
- d. All new trees should be double staked and secured with a rubber or plastic strip, or other approved commercial tie material. Wire ties should not be used.
- e. Plant materials should be placed so that they do not interfere with lighting of the premises or restrict access to emergency apparatus such as fire hydrants or fire alarm boxes. Trees or large shrubs should not be planted under overhead lines or over underground utilities if their growth might interfere with such public utilities.
- f. Trees and large shrubs should be placed as follows:

- A minimum of 8 feet between center of trees and edge of driveway, 6 feet from water meter or gas meter and sewer laterals.
- A minimum of 25 feet between center of trees and beginning of curb returns at intersections.
- A minimum of 15 feet between center of trees and large shrubs to utility poles and street lights; and
- A minimum of 8 feet between center of trees or large shrubs and fire hydrants and fire department sprinkler and standpipe connections.
- g. Existing mature, healthy trees should be preserved and incorporated within the overall landscaping plan.

2. Slope Revegetation and Erosion Control

- a. All slopes to be constructed at a gradient steeper than 6:1 horizontal to vertical and with a vertical height of three feet or greater, should be revegetated within 30 days of completion of grading.
- b. All slopes should be covered with herbaceous or prostrate shrubby ground covers.
- c. All plant materials should be appropriate to the site conditions, water conserving and appropriately spaced to control soil erosion.
- d. Trees, shrubs, and ground covers should be planted in undulating massings and groupings to reduce the constricted character of manufactured slopes.
- e. Revegetation on permanent slopes should include permanent irrigation systems.

F. Traditional Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Traditional neighborhood design or Neo-traditional design has specific development characteristics that result in pedestrian friendly communities. The following guidelines aim to create neighborhoods that place priority on the human scale and pedestrian activity. The guidelines are organized into four subsections: neighborhood form, circulation, architecture and lighting.

1. Neighborhood Form

- a. Neighborhoods should include various types of street hierarchies that provide equitably for pedestrian comfort, multi-modal transportation, and vehicular movement.
- b. Residences and other structures should be sited to define the street environment and the transition between public and private space.
- c. Natural features and historic resources should be preserved and incorporated into projects to the greatest extent feasible.

2. Circulation

- a. Streets should be designed to balance multiple purposes such as automobile traffic, transit, pedestrian and bicycle activities.
- b. Pedestrian pathways and sidewalks should have a minimum pavement width of four (4) ft.
- c. Alley access to garages is encouraged.
- d. Local streets should be designed with a 36-40' paved curb to curb sections (36 ft. curb to curb with parking on one side; 40 ft. curb to curb with parking on both sides). This width should include a minimum 24 ft. unobstructed fire access.
- e. Local streets should incorporate at a minimum 6-ft. parkways/planter strips and 4-ft. sidewalks. Parkway and planter strips should be planted with street trees spaced at a distance of 40 ft. on

center.

- f. Streets shall provide access to all tracts and lots. Cul-de-sac, T-turnarounds, gated and/or dead-end streets should be discouraged, except where the location or configuration of the parcel to be subdivided will not permit a through street to be used or when a significant natural or cultural feature can be more effectively preserved.



Alley access to garages is encouraged

3. Architecture

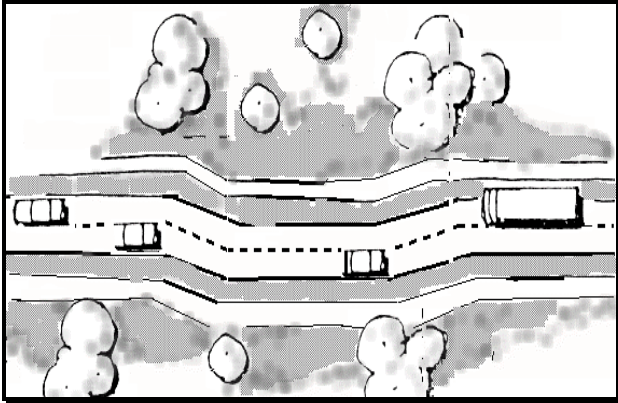
- a. The main dwelling entrance should be oriented towards the street and should be articulated with architectural detailing.
- b. Each floor of the dwellings should be delineated through belt courses, cornice lines, balconies, or similar architectural detailing.
- c. Front porches with a minimum depth of eight (8) ft. and a minimum width of twelve (12) ft. are encouraged.

4. Lighting

- a. Street lighting fixtures should be installed staggered on both sides of the street, at a maximum distance of 150 ft.
- b. Pedestrian-scaled lighting (18 ft. to 30 ft. high) should be located along all pedestrian routes.

G. Public Safety Through Design

- a. Traffic calming features should be integrated into the design of private streets. On-street parking, speed tables, gateway treatments, chokers, medians, and chicanes contribute to safety by slowing traffic and make it less attractive to through-traffic.



“Chicane” Design

- b. Lighting should be sufficient for sidewalk and street illumination. Pedestrian scale lighting fixtures that provide good levels of lighting are encouraged.
- c. Residences should be clustered into smaller “neighborhood” grouping or organized in smaller residential block patterns, rather than large development tracts.
- d. Front porches, back porches and/or decks, which permit casual observation of alleys and streets, are encouraged.
- e. Gates should be provided in walls or fences to allow emergency access and promote pedestrian access to activity areas and compatible adjacent uses.
- f. Adequate separation should be provided between adjacent land uses and park sites. Siting residential uses adjacent to park sites is discouraged. Where this occurs, view fencing, not solid walls, - should be utilized between the park site and residential properties.



Neighborhood park

- g. Locate neighborhood parks so that residential development provides “eyes and ears” on the park.
- h. Landscaping should be planted and maintained to allow visibility and eliminate areas of potential criminal activity.
- i. Delineate the separation between public and private spaces with paving, building materials, grade separations or with physical barriers such as landscaping.

